

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 293178

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL TEL SENT ACTION USDEL SECRETARY PARIS INFO SECSTATE
LUSAKA PRETORIA DAR ES SALAAM FROM LAGOS DTD 08 DEC 1977 QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 14173

NODIS - HANDLE AS EXDIS

(FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR MCHENRY

FOR PARIS FOR MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV, WA

SUBJECT: ALLEGED HINTS OF CHANGE IN SWAPO POSITION

REF: (A) LAGOS 14170, (B) STATE 292161 (TOSEC 120020) NOTAL

1. CONTRARY TO THE ASSUMPTION IN PARA 2 REFTTEL B, MY
RECOMMENDATION WAS MADE IN FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE
INTELLIGENCE REPORTS REFERRED TO AND NOW REPEATED TO LAGOS.

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SIMILAR REPORTS HAD BEEN DEVELOPED DURING OUR TALKS WITH
SWAPO AND THERE IS A STRONG PROBABILITY THAT THE BRITISH
INFORMATION IN FACT ORIGINATED WITH U.S. SOURCES. IN
ANY EVENT NOTHING IN THESE REPORTS, NOR THE CASUAL NATURE
OF THE FRENCH CONTACT WITH NUJOMA IN LUANDA, INDICATES
A CHANGE IN SWAPO'S POSITION AT THIS TIME. IRONICALLY,
WE BELIEVE BRITISH REP ON CONTACT GROUP SHARES OUR

ASSESSMENT ALTHOUGH HE IS DUTIFULLY AND RELUCTANTLY AND APOLOGETICALLY CARRYING OUT OWEN'S INSTRUCTIONS.

2. THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT TO CHANGE SWAPO'S POSITION. CLEARLY WE SHOULD DO SO. WE SHOULD HOLD IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION IS NOWHERE NEAR THAT WHICH WE ARE ASKING SWAPO TO ACCEPT AND THAT WHILE WE SEEK A CHANGE BY SWAPO IN ORDER TO ASSIST US IN PRESSURING A MORE CONVINCING CASE COULD BE MADE THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS NOT CHANGED SUFFICIENTLY IN ORDER TO ASSIST US IN PRESSURING SWAPO.

3. RATHER, THE QUESTION IS HOW DO WE BEST PURSUE SWAPO (AND FOR THAT MATTER SOUTH AFRICA). THUS FAR WE HAVE SPOKEN WITH SWAPO HARDLINERS AND THEIR POSITION HAS PREVAILED. WE WILL RUN A SERIOUS RISK OF GIVING THE HARDLINERS FURTHER AND POSSIBLY DECISIVE INFLUENCE IF WE SEEK TALKS NOW AND, AS I FEAR, NUJOMA HAS NOTHING NEW TO SAY, BUT SIMPLY AND REASONABLY WANTS TO BE BRIEFED ON THE RESULTS OF THE TALKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA. I AM CONVINCED THAT NOTHING WILL RESULT FROM OUR PLEADING WITH SWAPO AS OWEN PROPOSES.

4. RATHER THAN CHASE A MIRAGE, WE OUGHT TO ANALYZE THE INFORMATION AT HAND. IN MY VIEW THE KEY TO MOVING CONFIDENTIAL

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SWAPO IS (A) THROUGH THEIR FRONTLINE AND NORDIC SUPPORTERS WHO, ALTHOUGH THEY GENERALLY SUPPORT SWAPO'S POSITION, BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT SHORT OF COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL AND WOULD URGE SWAPO TO BE FLEXIBLE, IF ONLY FOR TACTICAL REASONS; AND (B) THROUGH AN EFFORT TO GO AROUND THE SWAPO HARDLINERS AND TO APPEAL TO THOSE WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION WHO ARE KNOWN TO FAVOR FLEXIBILITY IF ONLY FOR TACTICAL REASONS.

5. IN ANY EVENT, ALTHOUGH WE SHARE THE BRITISH DESIRE TO AVOID A CLASH WITH SOUTH AFRICA, WE SHOULD HAVE NO PART IN THEIR EFFORT (WHICH COINCIDENTALLY IS ALSO SOUTH AFRICA'S EFFORT) TO AVOID ACTION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA BY BLAMING SWAPO FOR THE FAILURE OF THE TALKS. SUCH AN EFFORT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE GIVEN THE LEGAL, POLITICAL AND MORAL STANDARDS BY WHICH SWAPO AND SOUTH AFRICANS POSITIONS WILL BE JUDGED.

6. WE DO NOT PROPOSE TO INITIATE ANY ACTION UNTIL WE HEAR FURTHER FROM YOU.
EASUM UNQTE CHRISTOPHER

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